United Nations A/54/PV.29

General Assembly
Fifty-fourth session

Official Records

29th plenary meeting
Thursday, 7 October 1999, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Gurirab ..... (Namibia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 10 *(continued)*

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/54/1)

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) *(spoke in Russian)*: The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization shows very convincingly that there is no alternative to strengthening the United Nations as the central mechanism for ensuring peace and stability in the emerging multipolar world. The reporting period, marked by the serious challenges of the Kosovo and Iraqi crises, has confirmed that the international community has no other universal tool to ensure joint management of international relations.

Comprehensive strengthening of the United Nations is one of the key elements of the initiatives by the President of the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin, to develop the concept of the world in the twenty-first century, as he stated at this session of the General Assembly.

A strong and efficient United Nations will allow us to attain the main objective of this initiative: to determine agreed parameters for creating a stable and prosperous world without violence and without war, on the basis of the principles of inter-State relations contained in the Charter, and to find collective responses to the most complicated global challenges.

One of these challenges is the severe humanitarian crisis caused by armed conflicts. The international community cannot stand by and let thousands of people suffer misery and systematic violation of their fundamental rights. Recent experience shows that maintaining regional and international stability depends directly on preventing and settling humanitarian crises.

However, it is also clear that violations of international humanitarian law cannot be stopped by taking action that is in violation of the Charter. Lawlessness can be suppressed only by lawful methods. It is only in this way that the civilized countries of the world resolve their domestic problems at the national level, and the same standard, the rule of law, should underlie world affairs.

The Charter of the United Nations provides basic criteria and mechanisms for responding to threats to peace and security. These mechanisms are also fully applicable to man-made humanitarian crises. As a last resort, the international community may employ coercive measures, including the use of military force, but this can be done only in strict conformity with the Charter and pursuant to a decision by the Security Council. We wholly agree with the Secretary-General's conclusion that enforcement actions without Security Council authorization and in contempt of its Charter-stipulated prerogatives tend to undermine the entire current international security system. The experience of Kosovo is already beginning to teach us lessons, and the international community should digest them so as not to

99-86065 (E)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

repeat errors that might be impossible to correct in the future.

These very basic principles determine our approach to the concept of humanitarian intervention. Without a doubt, the development of the world requires that existing rules of international law be developed and adapted to prevailing conditions, though this work should be carried out collectively and on the solid basis of the Charter. This would allow us to find agreed decisions whose legitimacy would not be discredited either in official statements or in plain informal talks.

Russia is ready to do this honest work. Moreover, we call on all Members of the United Nations to tackle this together. Let us jointly determine the criteria and legal framework for enforcement actions by the international community pursuant to the Charter, including in cases of humanitarian emergencies. Let us develop a clear and universally acceptable interpretation of humanitarian crises based on international law, so as to avoid double standards in this field, which the Secretary-General has rightly warned us against. This is precisely what the President of Russia had in mind with his proposal to consider at the Millennium Summit legal aspects of the use of force in international relations in this era of globalization. We are ready for the widest possible dialogue on this issue in various formats. We support Egypt's initiative that, within the framework of the General Assembly Working Group on An Agenda for Peace, we should have a subject-oriented discussion on a set of issues relating to the international response to humanitarian crises, with a view to elaborating agreed recommendations for the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session.

We cannot but agree with the Secretary-General that preventing crises and conflicts is in all respects cheaper than settling them and healing the wounds inflicted by them. The report contains a number of promising ideas and recommendations to enlarge the arsenal of preventive measures available to the international community. The United Nations and the Secretary-General are called upon to play a key role in preventing conflict, including through the institution of good offices. Consistent consolidation of an integrated approach to preventive action, including not only political but also socio-economic and humanitarian efforts, is justified. We cannot forget that international preventive measures should be based on a firm legal foundation as well. That presupposes proper observance of basic principles of respect for the sovereignty of States and non-intervention in their internal affairs.

Peacekeeping operations, which become more and more multi-component by nature, are a time-tested and effective tool for creating favourable conditions for a political settlement of crises and conflicts. Bringing the settlement of the Kosovo crisis back into the United Nations legal framework, under the control of the Security Council, and the planned deployment and expansion of a number of peacekeeping operations in Africa and East Timor, among others, demonstrate clearly that the central role of the United Nations in peacekeeping is irreplaceable. Successful completion of the current work on improving the United Nations peacekeeping potential, first of all from the point of view of higher quality of preparations and prompt deployment of peacekeeping operations, is the pledge of preserving such a role. Bringing the United Nations Standby Arrangements System to practical implementation as soon as possible is an optimum way of completing this task.

Strict political control by the Security Council over peacekeeping operations, primarily with regard to the need for the Council's decision on any operations involving elements of enforcement, including operations carried out in regional and coalition formats, continues to be the formative principle of and criterion for international peacekeeping.

There is no alternative to further development of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in peacekeeping, in accordance with Article VIII of the Charter. Such interaction covering the whole spectrum of peacekeeping activities, ranging from preventive diplomacy right up to post-conflict peace-building, should be based upon a reasonable division of labour, but in no case should it lead to dilution of the central role of the United Nations in this most important sphere.

Russia consistently supports the United Nations efforts to counter an "un-civil" society. The United Nations is called upon to play a leading role in mobilizing multilateral efforts to fight terrorism, the most dangerous challenge to global and regional security. It is also necessary to step up the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime, which the Secretary-General in his report has placed among the major problems facing the international community. We intend to assist actively in completing as soon as possible the elaboration of a convention on transnational organized crime. Russia is pleased with the progress achieved thus far within the framework of the Preparatory Commission for the International Criminal Court. Based on the Charter and

taking the prerogatives of the Security Council adequately into account, the future Court will become an important component of the system of international security.

The task of overcoming the serious financial crisis of the United Nations, without which it will be impossible to reform and strengthen the Organization in the interests of more effectively responding to the challenges of our time, still remains an urgent matter. It is essential to remove the main causes of the crisis — non-fulfilment by Member States of their financial obligations to the United Nations and continuing disparity between the scale of assessments and the real capacity of States to pay contributions. In spite of economic difficulties, Russia pays its contributions to the regular United Nations budget in full, and has reduced its indebtedness to the Organization by more than five times. This is a real demonstration, in deeds and not just in words, of our policy of supporting the United Nations in all respects. We will consistently continue to follow this policy, interacting constructively with all interested States.

Mr. Fonseca (Brazil): I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and objective report on the work of the Organization. It offers the General Assembly a broad picture of our achievements and of the challenges ahead. I would like, however, to focus my remarks on a specific aspect of the presentation of the report, while also taking into consideration his important statement to the General Assembly.

No issue presently commands greater attention — and, indeed, concern — of the international community than the question of how to respond to humanitarian crises and the threat to international peace that they sometimes pose. Whenever an unfolding crisis with dire consequences overcomes international indifference to become newsworthy, it is to the United Nations that public opinion looks to for leadership and meaningful answers. In such situations, our conscience requires us to act and the Charter gives us the tools to do so. The political vitality of the United Nations is measured by the outside world by our capacity to achieve solutions that alleviate human suffering and at the same time are balanced and based upon international law.

Yet some questions remain open. So the Secretary-General is fully justified in bringing before the General Assembly the humanitarian issue and all its wide-ranging implications — and his moral leadership also entitles him to do so. The issue of how to deal with humanitarian crises is not a new one, though its full implications remain uncharted. In fact, the challenges of recent years have led the international community to provide pragmatic answers to many of the questions posed by the Secretary-General, not only by the regular actions of humanitarian agencies and the coordinating work of the United Nations, but also, in certain cases, by specific decisions of the Security Council and even by unilateral actions. In the latter case, however, the record is ambiguous. Concerns raised by segments of the international community are understandable.

We cannot but share the Secretary-General's legitimate concern over recent developments. Situations similar to those we saw in East Timor and Kosovo should not happen again. But how are we to avoid them? First of all, the international community must undertake a profound discussion of all aspects of the problem that confronts the issue in all its multiple expressions and far-reaching complexities. To organize our reasoning, let us begin by asking certain preliminary questions.

By what criteria are we to judge that a humanitarian problem can no longer be solved by preventive measures alone? When does a humanitarian problem become a matter of international concern? When, therefore, does a specific situation trigger United Nations involvement? How do we define which measures are justifiably employed in those circumstances? These are conceptual issues that must be dealt with. The basic parameters to answer these questions are not yet clear.

In attempting to develop these guidelines, we will inevitably have to wrestle with the complexities and imponderables of human affairs: the origins of the humanitarian tragedy; the nature of the breaches of law; the scope of violations; and the exhaustion of peaceful and consent-based efforts to address the situation.

There are, additionally, certain basic principles that may offer us guidance, as follows. International humanitarian law has established since the last century that humanitarian actions require the impartiality of the provider and the consent of the recipient. Humanitarian tragedies are complex phenomena that require the involvement of the entire United Nations system acting on the basis of the guiding principles annexed to resolution 46/182; Security Council intervention must always remain the last recourse. Prevention and reaction are complementary and equally important, but the best strategy, as the Secretary-General states, is prevention. Yet, when prevention fails, the international community may be compelled to adopt forceful measures.

How, then, to deal with the dilemmas of outside intervention and the issues it raises concerning the limits of sovereignty and the use of force? We all agree with the Secretary-General that there are rights beyond borders. The condemnation of the apartheid regime is an eloquent example of how the United Nations can actively help in bringing about peaceful reform when overriding humanitarian interests are at stake.

The international community's commitment to humanitarian values finds clear expression in the broad consensus behind the establishment of the International Criminal Court.

We also know full well that sovereignty is the cornerstone of relations between States, and will remain so. It is by no means an obsolete concept. Moreover, a universal approach to humanitarian problems will be attained not by encroaching on the sovereignty of nations, but through a consensual and concerted understanding between States. Otherwise, selectivity will surely prevail over the most fundamental value enshrined in the Charter — universal participation in building global solutions for the problems of the commonwealth of peoples.

The Secretary-General's presentation reminded us that there are situations of massive and systematic abuse that may pose a threat to international peace and security. Brazil is of the view that, in such cases, the Security Council has a role to play. The Council can and should contribute to fostering a climate of compliance, for example, as concerns the rights of those in need to unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance. The recent debate on the question of the protection of civilians in armed conflict has shown that there is room for the Council and the General Assembly to work together in this matter.

But the fundamental challenge is clear. How are we to define a coherent and viable body of criteria to govern the international community's response to crises such as those unfolding in Kosovo, East Timor and Angola? The instruments available to the Security Council are multiple and well known, and yet they must be applied with restraint and prudence. The use of force on the basis of Chapter VII should always be an instrument of last resort. Should the international community choose this option of last resort, whatever action is taken must be time-bound, conducive to a political solution and undertaken in a spirit of transparency and accountability.

Clearly the way ahead requires a convergence between political interests and humanitarian values so as to make Security Council actions a real reflection of the needs and ideals of the international community. This will not easily be achieved, but we should not refrain from discussing the possibility of establishing universal criteria on when and how to intervene.

Two requisites are fundamental to our endeavour: first, there must be absolute respect for the Charter and for the competence of the Security Council in the use of force in the international arena, which means consistent respect for the rules and for the process of changing the rules; and secondly, the legitimacy of the international community's response to humanitarian crises depends on its commitment to devoting equal attention to equivalent problems. Human suffering in one part of the globe should not fuel greater indignation than it would if it were taking place elsewhere. As the Secretary-General has stressed, humanity, after all, is indivisible.

The Secretary-General's report does not confine itself to humanitarian problems, yet these crisis situations are closely linked to our Organization's failure to reverse the major problems it was established to combat. Indeed, these occur when conflict prevails over peace, poverty over development, political violence over respect for human rights, and hatred over tolerance and compassion.

It is clearly impossible to isolate humanitarian tragedies from their context. Ultimately, this means we must ask ourselves why inequality is so pervasive in the world we live in, and why political arbitrariness and intolerance are so enduring.

The United Nations must embark on this wide-ranging and uncharted debate in an open spirit of discovery and exploration. We must seek to develop in the next century a new synergy between the universal aspirations of humanity and the demands of statehood. We are still at the preliminary stage of this discussion, however. At least the in-depth debate that should follow this session will have the merit of raising the level of awareness of United Nations Members with respect to humanitarian questions.

Brazil is aware that these issues are extremely sensitive, that the dilemmas are real and that there are no easy solutions. Yet it would be futile to avoid this discussion. Brazil has always been committed to the universal promotion of human rights and to the

consolidation of international law as a safeguard against all manifestations of the idea that might makes right.

We are therefore prepared and willing to contribute to the efforts of the General Assembly to find realistic and balanced answers to the questions posed by the Secretary-General.

Mrs. Fritsche (Liechtenstein): I would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization, which we have before us. This document, together with the complementary oral presentation made on 20 September, is a remarkable effort to restore the United Nations to its rightful role in the pursuit of peace and security, and is thus an expression of genuine leadership.

While our Minister for Foreign Affairs has already commented on some of the thoughts of the Secretary-General in her speech of 24 September, we welcome this opportunity to offer some more detailed comments, which focus on what we view as the centrepiece of the report — what is increasingly referred to as a "culture of prevention". This term is, in our opinion, quite appropriate, because effective preventive action in any given area requires a certain conceptual framework and, as it were, a certain common mindset of the international community. Developing such a mindset can evidently not be the result of a single act, but can only be achieved as the result of a sustained and continued process — a process which we should all promote and participate in.

The United Nations has in the past few years steadily developed its early-warning capacities, which constitute a key element of effective prevention. What has been insufficient in many instances is the other key ingredient: political willingness to act. The prime example of the consequences of such inaction remains for us at the United Nations the genocide in Rwanda. The early-warning system was in place and functioning as well as one could wish, and the events which unfolded in 1994 had been predicted in almost frightening detail, but lack of political will to act made the international community — that means all of us — into idle bystanders. To add to the exasperation, most of us were at that time obliged — not just morally, but under the terms of the Genocide Convention — to prevent these acts.

As presented by the Secretary-General, the case to be made in favour of prevention is overwhelming. Prevention could save hundreds of thousands of lives and billions of dollars at the same time, and political energy and enormous financial resources could be used for other purposes. The question with regard to prevention cannot be: "What is in it for us?", since the answer to that is all too obvious. The question should be: "What is keeping us from applying it systematically?"

The concept of a "culture of prevention" entails a comprehensive approach to different kinds of problems. It is obvious, though, that the reluctance and occasional objections which often result in a lack of political will are particularly strong when it comes to conflict prevention. At a time when the overwhelming majority of armed conflicts are internal in nature, preventive approaches can be, and have been, perceived as a threat to the sovereignty of States. Indeed, the Secretary-General himself linked the two issues in his introduction of the report.

As a small — indeed, very small — country, we have always been very sensitive to the preservation of our national sovereignty. We would be the last ones to volunteer to forgo our sovereignty, let alone to ask others to do so. It just seems to us that the classic understanding of the term no longer enables us to cope with the changed realities of our world, and that sovereignty can no longer have the meaning which most of us are probably still accustomed to attributing to it. This is not the negotiated result of an intergovernmental process; it is simply the reflection of rapidly changing circumstances, redefined most notably by the realities of globalization. The sovereignty of States remains a cornerstone of our Organization, but it has to be interpreted and applied in a more flexible manner.

It has for long been recognized that environmental policies have to be based on mostly regional — even global — interests, not just on shortsighted national ones adopted in the context of that obsolete understanding of sovereignty. It is likewise obvious that policies which undermine human security — whether in the social, economic, human rights or any other related area — and thus place a burden on an entire region to the point of threatening its very stability are not for the discretion of the State responsible for them. We must to continue to alleviate human suffering in a spirit of solidarity, but we must also increasingly tackle the root causes of such suffering; that, after all, is the idea upon which the United Nations is based.

The Secretary-General rightly presented his visionary thoughts on the future of the Organization expressly in the light of certain events of the past year.

We share the concerns expressed from many sides at a possible erosion of the role assigned to the Security Council by the Charter. There can be no credible United Nations without a credible Security Council. The reform of the Council, considered by many to be a hopeless and somewhat tedious exercise, must focus on the core question, which is the veto.

The proliferation of internal armed conflicts is an undisputed fact, and the necessity of prevention is, as we see it, the subject of an emerging consensus. If we put these elements together, we almost naturally arrive at the Liechtenstein initiative on self-determination, which has almost become our *ceterum censeo*. We continue to believe very strongly that it is important to develop mechanisms which enable States to address the root causes of tensions, whether lingering or open, within their territories, and thus to prevent the outbreak of violence, which can take on the form of armed conflict. A full exploration of the right of self-determination, exercised within the confines of international law and based on a dialogue between the States concerned and the communities living within them, could go a long way towards our common goal of preventing armed conflicts, with all their devastating consequences. We hope that we can find the political will to do what is needed.

Mrs. Ashipala-Musavyi (Namibia): Let me at the outset express my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report outlining the work of the Organization for the past 12 months. It enables us, among other things, to establish the areas where we have attained our goals as well as those where our stated goals have not yet been achieved. Furthermore, the report is comprehensive and detailed. It gives a regional perspective on many issues, and I will address some of them briefly.

One of the most important issues addressed in the Secretary-General's report is cooperating for development. Development cooperation is an indispensable complement to the development efforts of developing countries. The report acknowledges that in this interdependent world, the challenges of development can be met only through well-planned, coordinated and adequately funded international action. United Nations development assistance is therefore an important tool in enhancing development. My delegation appreciates the initiatives taken by the United Nations, along with its specialized agencies, in the development efforts of the developing countries, and we hope that the United Nations Development Group, which was created in 1997, will help to meet this challenge.

The eradication of poverty remains one of the central goals of the United Nations, although, unfortunately, its achievement remains elusive. That point was made very clearly in the Secretary-General's report. As we speak, over 1.5 billion people, most of whom are in developing countries, live on less than $1 a day each. The majority of those who live in absolute conditions of poverty are, regrettably, women and children. Poverty is further compounded by the spread of HIV/AIDS, lack of shelter and food insecurity.

We therefore concur with the Secretary-General's report that better poverty eradication policies require improved risk assessment and early-warning strategies by national Governments and the United Nations development agencies. We also welcome the Freedom from Poverty action plan, which forms the basis of a new initiative led by the United Nations Development Group, to help programme countries to meet the goal of halving absolute poverty by the year 2015.

Economic conditions in Africa continue to decline. The report of the Secretary-General presents grim economic statistics on Africa, and no economy can sustain its growth amid those indicators. This problem needs to be seriously addressed if Africa is to grow out of poverty and if the African economies are to be integrated into the world economy and thus benefit from globalization, which is being talked about so much. Furthermore, the implementation of the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and their durable solution and the promotion of sustainable development is therefore imperative.

Today, international wars are continuing to take a heavy toll on civilian populations, especially the most vulnerable groups. We therefore agree with the Secretary-General's report that early warning is the best way to realize preventive diplomacy so that the tragedies occurring in different parts of the world could be averted. On the other hand, as the Secretary-General observed in his report, prevention can succeed only with the strong commitment of Member States and only if the provision of resources is adequate.

United Nations peacekeeping operations have faced many challenges. In our view, the United Nations should apply a uniform standard to peacekeeping operations in all regions. Selective peacekeeping will amount to only the partial maintenance of international peace and security. Similarly, inadequate funding of peacekeeping operations will deny peace and security to those who

need it most. In addition, the post-conflict peace-building efforts of the United Nations are commendable. They prevent the resurgence of conflict and create favourable conditions for a sustainable peace. But those efforts need to be sustained.

Furthermore, many States are also benefitting from the wealth of experience in the electoral assistance activities offered by the United Nations, for these facilitate institution-building and good governance.

Namibia supports the move towards greater cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the fields of preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping and confidence-building measures. In this respect, we register our appreciation to the United Nations for its continued cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in the field of training.

In the field of peacekeeping operations, we firmly believe that regional organizations should operate strictly in accordance with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. The tendency to undertake peace enforcement without a specific mandate from the Security Council should be discouraged, as it undermines the credibility of the Security Council and diminishes its role in the maintenance of international peace and security, as enshrined in the Charter.

With regard to disarmament, we concur with the Secretary-General that

> "The systematic and progressive reduction of nuclear weapons, with the ultimate goal of their complete elimination, will remain one of the priority tasks of the international community". [A/54/1, para. 119]

In this regard, as we enter a new millennium, the international community expects those who possess nuclear weapons to take the initiative, to exercise leadership in the field of nuclear disarmament, and above all to demonstrate their seriousness in the next millennium about fulfilling their obligations under the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

On the question of sanctions, Namibia supports the view that before sanctions are imposed, their scope and purpose should be defined and their duration clearly specified in the resolution imposing them. The responsibility for resolving problems arising from the application of sanctions must rest with the United Nations, in whose name sanctions are imposed. We expect the United Nations to find a solution to this problem.

As we approach the new millennium, we States Members of the United Nations must make a concerted effort to realize the hopes and aspirations of all the people of the world.

Mr. Yel'chenko (Ukraine): I would like to join previous speakers in thanking the Secretary-General for his annual report on the work of the Organization and for introducing it before the opening of the general debate some two weeks ago. The Secretary-General had a very demanding task to perform in preparing that document. First of all, he had to submit an account of United Nations activities during a year that was tremendously difficult for the Organization, a year when its principles were challenged and its relevance questioned. Moreover, the Secretary-General had to be very careful about what should be said in a document destined to go down in history as the last such report of the twentieth century.

In the view of my delegation, the Secretary-General coped brilliantly with that difficult task. Guided by what he called his "highest duty to restore to the United Nations its rightful role in the pursuit of peace and security" [see A/54/PV.4], he brought to the forefront of the discussion at the current session of the General Assembly some of the most fundamental issues facing the international community today: the prospects for human security and intervention in the next century.

The initial reaction to the responses proposed by the Secretary-General has confirmed the perplexing and controversial character of this matter. It has also revealed that at this stage Member States are not in a position to agree on their own answers. At the same time, it is really important that we start to think much more seriously about this problem — and that we start to think about it here, in the United Nations framework. According to our analysis, deliberations have thus far resulted in unanimity on at least three substantial conclusions deriving from the developments of the past year: first, the world community today has no viable alternative to the international security system founded on the Charter of the United Nations, whatever weaknesses it may display; secondly, the United Nations monopoly on authorizing the use of international force should not be brought into question, since that would threaten the very foundations of that security system; and thirdly, no recent development should be considered as having set a

precedent for the unauthorized use of external force on the pretext of humanitarian assistance.

My delegation is fully conscious that, although they are very important, these conclusions do not resolve all the difficult dilemmas that the international community has been facing and that it may face in the future. Therefore, it is our deep conviction that Member States must persevere in their serious reflection on the matter with a view to reaching agreement on all unanswered questions.

The President of the General Assembly could play an important role in determining what further steps should be taken to achieve concrete results in this endeavour. In that connection, Mr. President, you could consider the appropriateness of exercising some of the powers entrusted to your prominent office by the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 51/241 of 31 July 1997. In particular, in accordance with paragraph 7 of that resolution, the President of the General Assembly is entitled to conduct informal consultations to discuss action that may be required by the Assembly on the basis of the debate on the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization.

Another essential conclusion from the developments of the past year, which has also been stressed both in the general debate and in the Secretary-General's report, relates to the urgent need to strengthen the preventive potential of the Organization. In this connection, I cannot agree more with the Secretary-General that it is imperative for the United Nations to start the "transition from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention" [para. 61]. Ukraine has always insisted on the need to reinforce this dimension of United Nations activities. At the same time, Ukraine continues to maintain that respect for the principles of sovereign equality, political independence, territorial integrity and non-interference in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of States is of particular importance in the context of preventive action.

It is worth noting one important innovation in the present format of the report, which in the section on development now includes a distinct section on Africa. My delegation hopes very much that this innovation will be followed by a real change in the attitude of the United Nations towards African countries. One could hardly disagree that Africa is a continent which has unlimited potential for economic and social development. It is absolutely imperative that the international community take more concrete and efficient steps to assist African States in developing that potential and in responding to their challenges.

In general, my delegation is satisfied with the thematic overview of the work of the Organization contained in the main parts of the report, which embrace all the key areas in which the United Nations is mandated to conduct its activities. However, I would like to express hope that future reports of the Secretary-General will take into account all the relevant requirements of General Assembly resolution 51/241 with regard to both the format and the content of this document.

Let me conclude by stressing again our continued support for the Secretary-General's leadership in our common endeavour to strengthen the United Nations, and by reiterating the resolve of Ukraine to contribute actively to these efforts.

Ms. Moglia (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, on behalf of the Argentine Republic, I should like to congratulate the Republic of Kiribati, the Republic of Nauru and the Kingdom of Tonga upon their recent entry into the United Nations.

I thank the Secretary-General for the interesting thoughts contained in his report on the work of the Organization during the fifty-third session. The report invites us to reflect on the Organization's state of mind as it prepares to cross the threshold into the year 2000.

This approach shows how at the end of the century the United Nations is oriented much more towards the individual, towards the tragedy of peoples who are suffering because of a lack of democratic institutions, or because of armed conflict or natural disasters. This year there has been an increase in the number of armed conflicts, most of them within States, conflicts whose effects on the civilian population have been alarming. Similarly, the human and economic cost of natural disasters related to the climate has increased significantly.

These global problems demand a suitable response from the international community. We must enhance our capacity for helping the victims and formulating more effective preventive strategies. To be successful, those strategies must reach all communities that are experiencing emergencies. It is unacceptable for assistance to be given according to mass media attention or because of political or geographical considerations. Argentina shares the concern of the Secretary-General

about the unequal attention given by the international system to certain conflicts or catastrophes.

With regard to the management of humanitarian crises and the United Nations response to them, my delegation believes that these questions should be considered by the Working Group on an Agenda for Peace, which subsequently could present a report to this Assembly for consideration at its next session.

The United Nations, because of its universal nature and broad mandate, has the capacity and the right to act when faced with humanitarian problems. We agree with the Secretary-General that in order to be successful in this important work, the Organization must move from a culture of reaction to one of prevention.

With regard to armed conflict, the greatest challenge is to promote peace-building in the post-conflict period. In the short and medium term, peace-building must include preventive diplomacy, preventive deployment and preventive disarmament. These are complementary strategies and are the best way to avoid non-violent disputes becoming wars or to be sure that they do not fan the flames of old wars. In the longer term, it is necessary to deal with the deep-seated causes of such conflicts: poverty, extreme inequality and violations of human rights. For this reason, the international community must take an integrated approach, in which peace is directly related to economic development, democracy and good governance.

Maintaining international peace and security is an essential, unique task of the United Nations, and more particularly the Security Council. In view of the nature of current threats, the Security Council must acquire a new sensitivity, which can come about only through knowledge of the realities of the States most vulnerable to conflicts and of the prevention measures that are most effective in each case. Argentina has emphasized the importance of such awareness in the face of those challenges.

As the ideal means of achieving the goal I have described, we have encouraged within the Security Council open debates on topics related to peace-building, civilians and children in armed conflict, the situation in Africa, small arms and so on. The success of such debates is one more indication of the interest that a large part of the international community has begun to take in such questions.

Similarly, Argentina always supports having the Security Council work more transparently, encouraging contacts with the General Assembly and maintaining a frank dialogue with parties in conflict and with troop-contributing countries.

We are approaching the new millennium with work outstanding on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. Unfortunately, we are still concerned by the persistence of situations posing a danger of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and by illicit arms transfers that threaten the internal security of States and also regional and global stability. Nevertheless, we must acknowledge that in the last decade considerable progress has been made in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, which is encouraging.

As regards the prevention of natural disasters, we agree that it is urgently necessary to adopt measures to deal with global warming. In this context, the serious consequences on the environment of carbon emissions originating from human activity must be limited.

So far as development is concerned, the linking of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights as a basis for sustainable development is an achievement that we must never give up. Argentina welcomes the initiatives undertaken to devise new ways of interacting with international financial agencies. Progress in development is unthinkable without the participation of the Bretton Woods bodies. On the other hand, my delegation fully agrees that it is desirable that emergency assistance programmes be related to long-term development initiatives. My delegation welcomes the fact that the United Nations system is cooperating with the private sector and civil society to deal with the challenge of globalization.

The creation of special courts for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda and the adoption of the Rome Statute for the establishment of the International Criminal Court are events of fundamental importance in promoting international humanitarian law and human rights and in strengthening justice. A better and better organized world cannot do without ideal legal mechanisms; these are the sole guarantee that the Charter will be respected.

With regard to the management of change, to which the Secretary-General refers, we support the use of advanced technology as long as it does not harm those whom it is intended to benefit or its users, and particularly as long as it does not penalize those countries

that, because of their lower degree of technological development, are unable to gain anything from its use.

We support improving aspects of financial budgeting, in which we might include the results-based approach mentioned in paragraph 293 of the Secretary-General's report. Nonetheless, from the information that we have to date it is not clear exactly how this idea can help achieve the Organization's objectives and plans nor exactly what would be its consequences. Accordingly, we will pursue the analysis of this concept most carefully.

Mr. Calovski (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): This year the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization is in some aspects different from the previous ones. I believe this is because this year the Organization has faced many negative developments in many areas, and the Secretary-General quite rightly opted not only to report on the activities of the Organization and to be silent on some issues, but also to state his views and to make comments on issues of paramount importance for the work of our Organization and for international cooperation in the period to come. We appreciate his endeavour and we share many of his views.

The report, as a matter of fact, has been responsible for stimulating discussion of the role of our Organization in the twenty-first century. In essence, in our view, there are two topics that need to be addressed in that discussion — and, of course, there are many sub-topics. The first is the current and future relevance of the Charter of our Organization, and the second is the relevance of the mechanisms provided by the Charter. Are they adequate for the present and future character of international relations and international cooperation and for global, regional and national political, economic and social development? Are the mechanisms provided by the Charter — the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice and the Secretariat — adequate to ensure the observance of the Charter and the implementation of the resolutions that our Organization adopts?

In our view, a review of the Charter could be a useful undertaking. The aim should be the democratization of international relations and the reaffirmation of the purposes and principles of the Charter and of international law. The fact is that, although adopted 55 years ago, the purposes and principles of the Charter do not need to be changed. But a new and modern interpretation, or a more adequate, authoritative interpretation, could be useful. It is important that we share an understanding of the provisions in the Charter. The body to undertake this task is, of course, the International Court of Justice, and afterwards its work would be reviewed by the General Assembly. This undertaking, in our view, should be done before the Millennium Summit scheduled to start on 6 September 2000.

So far the discussion has concentrated on the principle of the sovereignty of States, the duty of observing human rights and the membership of the Security Council. As we all know, discussion of these issues intensified on account of several events: the Kosovo crisis, in which, as the Secretary-General has said, a group of States intervened without seeking authorization from the Security Council; the intervention in East Timor authorized by the Security Council and agreed to by Indonesia; and the inaction in Rwanda.

The starting point for this discussion should be that concern for human rights is universal and that people confronting difficulties should be assisted. The slogans of equality, justice, solidarity and so on will not be taken seriously if the international community is prevented from acting to assist peoples in difficult situations.

My country, the Republic of Macedonia, has been involved with the principle of the sovereignty of States in a very concrete situation. When the wave of refugees from Kosovo to the Republic of Macedonia began to arrive, we could have done one of two things: as a sovereign State we could have closed our border with Kosovo, or opened the border and assisted the refugees. Humaneness and the universal duty to respect human rights prevailed. We received 360,000 refugees, of whom about 35,000 remain. We have been praised for our actions, and we have received many promises which we hope will be fulfilled.

So, when faced with the need to prevent massive violations of human rights it is important not to be excessively dogmatic or legalistic about the principles of the sovereignty of States or of non-interference in the internal affairs of States. In such circumstances, humaneness must prevail and actions should be based on accepted legal grounds. These legal grounds are international humanitarian law and other bodies of human rights laws as defined in international instruments. It goes without saying that our duty is to uphold the principles of the sovereignty of any State, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, the territorial integrity of all

States, the inviolability of international borders and other principles set forth in the Charter.

Another aspect to which the Secretary-General has devoted a large part of his report is the prevention of conflicts. He put forward his views in a very convincing way. We share his positions. As you know, the Republic of Macedonia was the host of the first United Nations preventive mission: the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP). It was an important success story for the United Nations and for the Republic of Macedonia. Regrettably, it ended when it was most needed and delegations know why. The experience of this mission should be carefully analysed and lessons learned made use of in future actions. In parts of the world where conflicts are brewing it makes more sense to send a United Nations preventive mission than to wait until after a tragedy occurs to send a mission. There is no need to elaborate or argue in favour of such a policy.

The Secretary-General appropriately devotes much of his report to the consequences of natural disasters. Last year and this year we had too many floods, earthquakes, droughts and so on. In the future disaster prevention should be pursued more vigorously. In this area, the international community is well organized and thus can do much better in the future.

The relevance of our Organization will depend in future on the work of its organs or, it might be better to say, on the activities of the Member States in those organs. We cannot state that we are fully satisfied. We have an active, devoted and visionary Secretary-General and a highly skilled Secretariat, but that is not enough.

In our view, shared by many delegations, the potential of the General Assembly is not fully utilized. We cannot hide the fact that the General Assembly is often avoided or marginalized, which of course, should be corrected. It is certain that the Security Council is working hard, but we are concerned that it has started to work as a deliberative body, which it was not created by the Charter to do. Its nature is to be an executive body of our Organization. The deliberative body is the General Assembly.

The fact is that the General Assembly was doing almost nothing on major political developments throughout the year, except on the peace process in the Middle East, in spite of its obligations under Articles 10, 11 and 24 of the Charter. The representatives of Member States, not members of the Security Council, were put in the situation in which they could only follow what the Security Council was doing, in spite of the role of the General Assembly, as I have mentioned, under the Charter, as set out in Articles 10, 11 and 24.

If this regrettable situation continues, the need of the General Assembly to be involved in the maintenance of international peace and security will diminish further. To change this negative situation and prevent the further marginalization of the General Assembly, it should start to work and to discuss topics of peace and security year-round. That will not damage the position or reputation of the Security Council. On the contrary, the Security Council will better know the views of the majority of Member States, not just those of 15 of them. That could make a big difference and the Security Council will function as a true executive body of our Organization for the maintenance of international peace and security.

I will stop here and stress that my delegation appreciates the information contained in the Secretary-General's report and, in particular, the readiness of the Secretary-General to put forward his views on many issues to be discussed during this and next year's sessions of the General Assembly.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): Allow me to begin by expressing my appreciation and thanks to the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization, contained in document A/54/1. Secretary-General Kofi Annan is to be commended not only for this useful and informative report, but also for his constant efforts to improve the performance of the United Nations and increase its efficiency.

The humanitarian crisis in Kosovo helped revive, once again, the discussion on how the international community should deal with humanitarian catastrophes. In the face of this crisis, there was a consensus on the need for immediate action to stop the grave crime of ethnic cleansing, on the one hand, and disagreement on who had the right to act, on the other. While advocating resolute action against the perpetrators of crimes in Kosovo, we aligned ourselves with those who believed that any international action, especially the use of force, must emanate from the Security Council as the organ primarily responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security.

In our opinion, if the Security Council is precluded from carrying out its mandate by a lack of consensus, then the General Assembly, as the body fully representative of all Members, must play its Charter role

in dealing with any threat to international peace and security. The impotence of the Security Council in the case of Kosovo was another case in point, which strengthens the call for limiting the application of the veto with a view to its eventual eradication. A lack of consensus in the Security Council does not entitle any country or small group of countries to act unilaterally in dealing with conflicts, particularly when gross violations of the sovereignty of other States are involved. In our view, the use of force or any other violation of the very basic principle of international law — respect for the integrity and sovereignty of other States — undermines the goals and principles of the United Nations Charter.

We do not know any viable alternative to the United Nations as a unique mechanism for maintaining international peace and security and for promoting multilateral cooperation through the search for a mutually acceptable balance of interests. Therefore, the strengthening of the central role of the United Nations — and, first and foremost, strengthening the role and increasing the efficiency of the General Assembly — should remain on the agenda for the decades to come.

The maintenance of the legal basis of the international security system; the imperative of wider political support for humanitarian operations; the requirement of different security policies for different regions; and the need for complex multidisciplinary responses to complex humanitarian emergencies are the reasons, among others, for strengthening the role of the United Nations, which would allow the international community to deal with humanitarian situations in a lawful and effective manner.

Ideas and concepts — such as humanitarian intervention, a suggested role for multinational corporations and the assessment of the security impact of development policies — put forward by the Secretary-General in his report with a view to developing a culture of prevention need to be thoroughly studied and carefully reviewed by the general membership of the United Nations. In this context, we believe that the General Assembly, as the sole democratic, universal and transparent organ of the United Nations, is the proper forum to carry out an in-depth analysis of the implications of such ideas to prevent humanitarian catastrophes and to address them when they arise. The imperative of maintaining the integrity of the Charter system is the common point of departure in this exercise.

In the meantime, it is helpful to look back at the occasional failures of the international community to legally intervene in situations of humanitarian catastrophes. The reasons for such failures are manyfold, but chief among them is the reluctance of the Member States to provide necessary human and material resources. Rwanda and some other similar cases have already called into question the consistency of the international community in responding to humanitarian emergencies. The United Nations should not allow a number of factors, at times beyond its control — such as media coverage, politics and geography — to play an important role in the way it responds to crises and allocates resources.

Human casualties, the serious socio-economic impact of natural disasters on the livelihood of people, particularly in developing countries, and the rapidly escalating loss of human lives and financial cost of these disasters in recent decades clearly indicate the need for devising effective strategies for the prevention of natural disasters and the mitigation of their devastating effects.

Poverty intensifies the impact of natural hazards and increases the vulnerability of societies to natural disaster. Poverty eradication and its importance in mitigating these hazards should be an integral part of any study aimed at devising preventive strategies for natural disasters.

As has been indicated in the Secretary-General's report, more than 90 per cent of all disaster victims worldwide live in the developing countries. Lack of resources and incorrect construction codes for buildings and shelters, deforestation, desertification, destruction of wetlands and other environmental malpractices contribute to the ever greater impact of natural disasters. In all cases, prevention will reduce the financial costs of natural disasters, which have increased from $52 billion in the 1960s to $479 billion in the 1990s.

Early warning, contingency planning, preparedness measures and mitigation are essential elements for reducing the frequency and impact of natural hazards. An internationally concerted framework for improving early warning by developing concrete proposals for an effective international mechanism, including the transfer of technology to developing countries, under the auspices of the United Nations as part of the implementation of related actions of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, should be established.

Improving education and training in disaster reduction, including the creation of interdisciplinary and technical networking at all levels, through international assistance for the purpose of capacity-building and human

resource development in developing countries, in particular those that are prone to natural disasters, is also necessary for the successful implementation of national programmes. Civil society organizations and the private sector should also be involved in preparedness measures and mitigation to address the devastating impact of national disasters. Technical assistance and the exchange of information about positive practices is quite useful to this end.

Mr. Pfanzelter (Austria): As previous speakers have done, I would like to thank Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his report on the work of the Organization. The report demonstrates leadership and is thought-provoking.

How to prevent armed conflict and act on humanitarian emergencies is the major challenge before all of us. In this context, the Secretary-General presents a comprehensive approach and a set of ideas which deserve broad public attention and strong support. The prevention of conflict and human suffering was also the main theme of the speech given by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Austria in the general debate. Today I would like to restrict myself to a few additional comments.

We agree entirely with the Secretary-General when he states that the prevention of armed conflict is the highest goal of the United Nations. This, of course, in no way means that there should be a one-sided emphasis on peace and security to the detriment of other priority tasks of the United Nations, such as development or human rights. Indeed, recent history demonstrates how interdependent these issues are. Most of today's conflicts arise when the concerns of groups and individuals regarding physical safety and well-being, political and economic participation and cultural or religious expression are threatened or denied. What is thus needed today is a broad approach embracing all policy instruments: from early warning and preventive diplomacy to a targeted use of the instruments of development cooperation to address the root causes of conflict. Peace-building, so far seen primarily in its post-conflict dimension, has a prominent role in prevention strategies.

Inequalities between various groups and lack of security within countries are the main reasons for instability and the outbreak of armed conflict. In order to maintain or restore stability, we have to provide individuals and communities with human security. To overcome imbalances, a fairer process of governance at all levels of society is needed. Existing resources should be targeted to provide a voice to all groups within societies and create a set of built-in dispute settlement mechanisms for addressing group concerns before they grow into major problems. Good governance must be an integral part of conflict prevention strategies.

As the prevention of armed conflict requires first and foremost a careful analysis of the current situation, Austria welcomes the proposal to explore the idea of assessing the impact of development policies on conflict. In the framework of our own development cooperation, we are developing a comprehensive strategy of conflict prevention, combining all available tools, from facilitation and mediation to a targeted use of the instruments of development cooperation. Our aim is to promote both sustainable development and sustainable peace.

We are called upon to refine traditional instruments of conflict prevention, by improving capacities for early warning and early response strategies in cooperation with regional organizations; by preventive diplomacy through official or informal envoys or the establishment of small political presences *in situ*; and by preventive disarmament, in particular in the area of small arms and light weapons. We concur with the Secretary-General that preventive deployment has remained very underutilized so far. We should give more thought to the possibilities of preventive deployment in order to make better use of it in our response strategies.

The international community is faced with a double challenge: on one hand, countries are sometimes not prepared to recognize the necessity and benefit of early action to prevent the escalation of a potentially dangerous situation. On the other hand, the international community and its most powerful members in particular, often lack the will to engage politically, financially or otherwise in the early phase of conflict. This unfortunate combination of, on the one hand, the insistence on non-interference by the country concerned and, on the other hand, the reluctance of the international community to commit politically and to provide sufficient collective resources can have terrible consequences, in particular for the civilian population.

We therefore need the political will and the commitment for a strategy of prevention on all sides. Any country concerned should be wise enough to accept at an early stage necessary international support in mediation, negotiation or conciliation; and the international community should take early warnings seriously and act in an appropriate manner at the earliest

possible stage. The United Nations must be in a position to bridge the gap between early warning and early action.

My last point highlights the particular responsibility of the Security Council. The Council, carrying the primary responsibility for international peace and security, must enhance its ability to act. The Council must not be seen to be driven by subjective interests of members rather than by an objective assessment of real requirements. It is not acceptable that responsibilities which are essentially global are declared local, even when it is clear that local or regional capacities to keep the peace are simply not available or would be strained tremendously.

Austria welcomes the thoughts of the Secretary-General on clear and identifiable criteria for decisions to intervene in a conflict. They need to be applied evenly and objectively, be it in Africa, the Americas, Asia or Europe. It is our hope that this question will receive priority attention in the follow-up to Security Council resolution 1265 (1999), on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Together with the establishment of the International Criminal Court, this approach would form a sound basis for one of the pillars of successful prevention of conflicts: credible deterrence. Parties to conflicts must know that they might face the response of the international community. Individuals involved must know that they cannot act with impunity and will be made responsible for their actions.

Many specific aspects of such a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention are addressed in the General Assembly: social cohesion, the eradication of poverty, the protection of minorities and human rights, democratic governance, peacekeeping and the rule of law in internal and international relations. It is my hope that every Main Committee will make a serious effort to contribute to a successful strategy of prevention on the part of the United Nations.

Mr. Hasan (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I will limit my observations on the report of the Secretary-General to two issues. First, in paragraph 81 of his report in document A/54/1, the Secretary-General referred to the developments with regard to Iraq by describing the American and United Kingdom aggression against Iraq on 16 December 1998 as follows:

> "In the face of continuing Iraqi non-compliance, the use of force by two Member States ... was predictable."

This is flagrantly untrue. Iraq complied with its commitments according to Security Council resolutions and the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Secretary-General in February 1998, but the party that did not comply and, indeed, presented a misleading report on the status of Iraq's compliance, was the former head of the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM), Richard Butler. He did this in order to justify aggression against Iraq. UNSCOM was a tool for the United States of America to perpetuate the blockade against Iraq and to justify aggression against it. Agents of the Central Intelligence Agency were members of UNSCOM's inspection teams; they had illegitimately set up eavesdropping and spying equipment in order to monitor the movements and the communications of Iraqi officials. Mr. Butler used to receive instructions directly from the United States Secretary of State, Mrs. Albright.

This was admitted by the former inspector Scott Ritter. It was not denied by the American Administration. The Secretary-General stated to the BBC on 27 June 1999 that the accusations lodged against the UNSCOM inspectors of spying for the United States were somewhat true.

Mr. Butler withdrew UNSCOM workers from the Baghdad monitoring and verification centre, hours before the aggression of 16 December 1998, after receiving instructions from high officials in the American Administration, without the knowledge or the authorization of the Security Council or the Secretary-General. That was not the first time that inspectors had been withdrawn from Iraq on the basis of American instructions, without the knowledge or approval of the Security Council. They had been withdrawn before in November 1998.

Mr. Butler presented a misleading report to the Security Council on 15 December 1998, in which he claimed Iraqi lack of cooperation with UNSCOM. That report was received unfavourably by most Security Council members. At the official Council meeting held a couple of hours after the aggression, a permanent member stated the following:

> "The leader of UNSCOM has played a dishonourable role in this crisis. The reports submitted by UNSCOM to the Secretary-General were one-sided and evasive regarding the facts. It is difficult for the UNSCOM leader to shirk his responsibility in the current crisis." *(S/PV.3955, p. 5)*

Another permanent member of the Security Council stated the following:

> "the current crisis was created artificially, partly as a result of the irresponsible acts of the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission, Richard Butler. On the night of 15 December this year, he presented a report that gave a distorted picture of the real state of affairs and concluded that there was a lack of full cooperation on the part of Iraq. That conclusion was not borne out by the facts." *(S/PV.3955, p. 4)*

Thus, the previously cited statement in paragraph 81 of the Secretary-General's report —

> "In the face of continuing Iraqi non-compliance, the use of force by two Member States ... was predictable" —

is truly bizarre! The use of force against Iraq by the United States and the United Kingdom on 16 December 1998, at a time when the Security Council had met to debate the issue of Iraq, was indeed a stark breach of the United Nations Charter and of the authority and the resolutions of the Security Council.

A few hours later, the Security Council held a formal meeting at which the majority of the Council members disapproved, denounced or criticized the American-British aggression against Iraq. One of the permanent members mentioned in that meeting that:

> "the United States and the United Kingdom have grossly violated the Charter of the United Nations, the principles of international law and the generally recognized norms and rules of responsible behaviour on the part of States in the international arena. Essentially, a threat has been made to the entire system of international security.
>
> ...
>
> "The entire responsibility for the consequences of those actions must be borne by those States that have chosen a unilateral act of force in order to resolve their problems with Iraq. No one is entitled to act independently on behalf of the United Nations, still less assume the functions of a world policeman." *(S/PV.3955, p. 4)*

The Non-Aligned Movement also denounced this act of aggression. In a statement on 17 December 1998 the Movement denounced the military actions undertaken by individual States against Iraq without authorization from the Security Council in flagrant violation of the Charter. This confirmed that a majority of the Members of the United Nations denounced this act of aggression.

We had hoped that the report of the Secretary-General would express the view of the international community on the individual use of force against Iraq, especially since another part of the report dealt with the use of force in Kosovo.

> "... enforcement actions without Security Council authorization threaten the very core of the international security system founded on the Charter of the United Nations. Only the Charter provides a universally accepted basis for the use of force." *(A/54/1, para. 66)*

I take this opportunity to reaffirm that the United States of America and the United Kingdom are legally responsible for the act of aggression perpetrated on 16 December 1998 that claimed the lives of hundreds of Iraqi citizens and during which the infrastructure and the economic and education installations were destroyed.

Iraq affirmed its legal right to claim compensation for the damages caused by that aggression. The Security Council has to demonstrate fairness in dealing with Iraq and hold the aggressors responsible for the aggression if it is to show that it does not work selectively and practice double standards. Indeed, we doubt that it would do that.

As regards the issue of humanitarian intervention and limited sovereignty, we associate ourselves with the majority of Member States, especially States of the South, that referred to the contravention by such ideas of international law, the Charter and the principal guidelines in contemporary law such as sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity, as well as non-interference in the internal affairs of others.

The Durban summit of the Non-Aligned Movement reaffirmed the fact that human rights should not be used as a political pretext to interfere in the affairs of other States. The 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations stated:

> "No State or group of States has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, for any reason

whatever, in the internal or external affairs of any other State."

On the other hand, the majority of jurists of international law are opposed to the principle of interference for humanitarian reasons for the following three reasons: first, the Charter and contemporary international law do not include such rights; secondly, practices among States during the last two centuries have not witnessed, except in rare circumstances, such interference; and thirdly, the possibility of misuse would provide a strong motive not to have recourse to this principle.

The Charter of the United Nations and the International Covenants on Human Rights, as well as other international instruments, have provided a framework to deal with breaches of human rights. What is needed is to activate and not ignore or sidestep such machinery.

The attempts to impose new ideas such as humanitarian intervention in our world today — a world controlled by one single, wanton Power — will not ensure international security. Rather, they will jeopardize international security, and the countries of the third world will be the first victims. What is needed is increased preventive diplomacy to grapple with the root causes of conflicts and crises, most of which result from the lack of development and the continuous marginalization, both political and economic, of the countries of the South.

To whose benefit, then, would it be to have human rights oppose sovereignty? What are the objective criteria needed to define the nature of the breaches of human rights that necessitate interference? Is it possible to ignore the role of external interference in destabilizing internal conditions in the developing countries and in laying the groundwork for political, social and economic instability in these countries? What about breaches of the right of people to development, and the imposition of economic sanctions, whether individual or multilateral, on such people? Who will decide on the legality of humanitarian intervention? Who will decide on the availability of objective conditions for intervention, especially since some jurists believe that what is considered by some as intervention for humanitarian reasons is considered by others as a crime against humanity?

These questions and others have both a legal and a political aspect. Hence, the issue in all its aspects requires serious consideration on the basis of the principles of the Charter, with the participation of all the countries and Members of the United Nations. We believe that the General Assembly is the appropriate forum for such consideration.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) *(spoke in Arabic)*: I am pleased at the outset to extend my thanks to the Secretary-General for the report on the work of the Organization. This report has acquired a special importance since it is the last report on the work of the Organization before we turn the last pages of this century.

The Secretary-General seized this opportunity to present us with a vision that went beyond a year's work to an appraisal of the concept of an international system and of the efficiency of the performance of the international community within the framework of the concept of collective security established by the Charter over 50 years ago. He did not give us a descriptive report, but one based on his prerogatives, responsibilities and discretionary powers, putting forward a vision and initiatives to confront what he views as threats to international peace and security and ideas on how the United Nations could respond to political, humanitarian and human rights crises.

Despite the fact that the report has gone to great lengths to abide by the traditional classification of subjects dealt with in an annual report on the work of the Organization, it seems to us that it focused on the idea of the introduction's heading, "Facing the humanitarian challenge". Proceeding from this idea, the report dwelt on the subject of the expansion of preventive measures to avert the escalation of armed conflicts. The Secretary-General's philosophy is based on a discussion of the idea of humanitarian intervention and its legitimization through expanding the prerogatives of the Security Council to intervene in situations of violations of human rights in both war and peace, and within the context of an evolving and consistent framework. We can trace the development of that framework in the various reports and statements of the Secretary-General — such as the report he presented to the Security Council on the protection of civilians in armed conflict and his statement to the General Assembly at this session — as well as in the reports presented by human rights and international humanitarian law rapporteurs of the United Nations system.

In our view, this has happened as a result of the failure of the international community to face emergency humanitarian situations and as a reaction to the criticism

directed at the Organization during the Kosovo crisis, which led some to say that the survival of the Organization was threatened. Here I must recall that the failure of the Organization to respond to the Kosovo crisis was the result of impediments in the decision-making process of the Security Council. Therefore, granting the Council new prerogatives would not necessarily lead to bridging the gap in the international legal system. The way to actually bridge that gap is to reform the working methods of the Council that obstructed the effectiveness of its work.

It is true that the world is currently facing urgent humanitarian problems. We agree with the Secretary-General's view that there is a special responsibility in connection with the escalation of these problems that compels him to present proposals to deal with them in order to avert their recurrence. However, we cannot agree with the report's assertion that we should give prevalence to practical considerations over adherence to the principles and balance of the Charter. It is true that we must be careful, when protecting the rights of individuals in times of both peace and war, not to take actions that run counter to the Charter. However, we cannot imagine what necessity or even practical considerations would prompt us to violate the principles of the Charter in upholding the concepts of human rights and international humanitarian law. If the intent is to deal with the shortcomings inherent in the edifice built by the Charter of the United Nations, let it be done through legal channels and the measures stipulated in the Charter.

There are a number of things that can be done collectively in this area. Regardless of our desired objectives, adhering to the law is a sacred duty that must be observed in order to avoid any rifts. Working within the framework of the international community without clear and precise agreement as to a legal authority is definitely dangerous. Such a situation cannot be tolerated or endured by the less powerful and less developed countries while the more developed and stronger countries drag the international community into the law of the jungle.

We sincerely support the idea that the international community and the United Nations must resist any organized process of attacking civilians in times of armed conflict or of subjecting them to aggression, be it within the framework of an international dispute or in an internal situation where the State has lost the ability to exercise control over its territories. We must punish the perpetrators of such acts through the faithful application of the Charter.

The protection of humankind and of the right to live in security and peace has always been a sacred objective in the evolution of all civilized societies. Today we see greater and well-deserved attention being focused on giving unprecedented priority to man's protection. We strongly support this. Nevertheless, we would also like to emphasize the responsibility of the State in protecting society and preserving its values and principles. In this regard, we should not be driven to destroy the entrenched legal entity we know as the State in the process of protecting humankind. What we hear in the international community about the redefinition of the concept of State sovereignty through the phenomenon of globalization and international cooperation vis-à-vis the so-called sovereignty of the individual is a matter that should be dealt with scrupulously and carefully within an integrated and comprehensive framework of political and legal considerations. Such a framework will further maintain the edifice of the international community and the right of States to live in peace and stability and free from interference in their internal affairs or disturbances of their internal stability and cultural idiosyncrasies. I would like to reaffirm here that the concept of humanitarian intervention has yet to find any echo in either jurisprudence or in international covenants, resolutions or conventions.

On the basis of this vision, we welcome and support the readiness of the Security Council to react, within the parameters of the Charter and within its own prerogatives, to situations in which civilians are targeted or in which access to humanitarian assistance is deliberately impeded. Yet we must keep in mind that the Council must perform its tasks within the framework of its Charter obligations; that is to say, it must intervene in cases where international peace and security are threatened.

In this connection, I would like to reaffirm the need to rid ourselves of double standards in the area of human rights. The international community must give equal attention to all conflict situations that lead to loss of civilian life, regardless of where they take place and without giving prevalence to the individual political considerations of one country or another. Furthermore, no priority should be given to any group of States in the Security Council.

These innovative concepts underscore the idea of humanitarian intervention even though, as I have said, that concept has yet to be developed, and does not yet enjoy consensus. These concepts also raise the issue of

infringement on the sovereignty of States and the attempt to develop what the Secretary-General refers to in his report as a culture of crisis prevention.

In his statement before the General Assembly on 23 September last, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt said that in order to properly consider these ideas, which take on an additional dimension in view of the nature of the issues they raise, we should pause, study them and reflect on them with the seriousness they deserve.

The Egyptian Minister also stated that precautions must be taken in connection with the concept of preventive action. He noted that if we embark on this path, we must do so with utmost respect for the norms and principles of international legality and act only within the institutional and legal framework stipulated in the Charter.

The matter is clearly highly complex and sensitive. It relates to the responsibilities and prerogatives of the Security Council, mainly Article 24 of the Charter. The article defines the concept of threat and determines the scope of any threat to international peace and security or to the internal affairs of a State. Moreover, it defines the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly and its powers, since the General Assembly is the organ comprising the United Nations membership as a whole. This question is also linked to a large extent with the balance between the provisions of Chapter VI and Chapter VII of the Charter and the distinction between them as well as with the relationship between the chapters and the will of the State. All of these issues require a great deal of scrutiny and consideration on our part.

In introducing his report on 20 September, the Secretary-General posed a number of questions. As he rightly observed, those questions should be accorded considerable examination in order for agreement to be reached on the specific criteria relating to each question.

Hence, on the basis of our belief in the need to reform the United Nations in the framework of an integrated and comprehensive outlook, Minister Amre Moussa proposed that we deal with the ideas contained in the report of the Secretary-General, objectively and democratically through an open international dialogue characterized by utmost frankness and transparency and within an appropriate institutional framework.

On that basis, the Egyptian Minister for Foreign Affairs called on the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General to consider taking the necessary measures so that the Assembly, or a special committee of the Assembly, can deal with these proposals and elaborate on them for a unanimous adoption by all States. He also suggested that the Secretary-General submit a report summarizing the results of that debate to the next session of the General Assembly so that a decision can be taken on these proposals.

Today we had the opportunity to review the ideas of the Secretary-General in a general and comprehensive manner, yet we believe that we must examine them more closely in order to reach conclusions regarding the impact of such ideas and concepts on the established norms of international relations, including the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and the inviolability of their internal affairs in the framework of respect of human rights considerations.

Hence we propose that these ideas be discussed in the framework of a task force on the Agenda for Peace, because the subject matter handled by such task force is closely linked with the issues currently under discussion. We hope that you, Sir, as President of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, will initiate an active and open dialogue and consult with all interested parties in order to reach agreement on a proposed methodology.

Mr. Lee See-Young (Republic of Korea): Allow me to begin by expressing my delegation's deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for his insightful and thought-provoking annual report on the work of the Organization (A/54/1). I believe that this report serves as a useful basis for our deliberations here today and also throughout the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

As the report points out, natural disasters and civil wars have emerged as the major threats to the security of individuals and human communities worldwide in the 1990s. It is a staggering fact that over 90 per cent of the armed conflicts this decade have been civil wars, and that proportion has increased even further since 1998. In addition, damage stemming from natural disasters has tripled from the levels of the 1960s, a trend that is likely to continue in the years to come.

Such data casts a cloud of uncertainty over the optimism with which we anticipate the twenty-first century. It is therefore incumbent upon us to mobilize fully the various forums of the United Nations system to reaffirm our political will and gather our collective wisdom to cope with these daunting challenges.

In the light of that imperative, it is our sincere hope that next year's Millennium Assembly will be able to provide the world community with a clear vision and guiding principles that will lead us in our common efforts to surmount such challenges in the twenty-first century. For the Millennium Assembly to be successful, we call upon all Member States to participate seriously in the preparatory process and to display a sense of harmony and compromise to expedite the process. We are also counting on your able leadership and wisdom, Mr. President, in successfully guiding the preparatory process in the months to come.

Let me now turn to the issue of peace and security, which is of major concern to all of us. Over the past year, violent and devastating conflicts have racked numerous portions of the world. Regrettably, the international community has not been consistent in the past few years in responding to the different conflicts in various parts of the world, thus sometimes putting international norms into question and occasionally undermining the authority of the United Nations. The principle of State sovereignty has prevailed in certain cases, while in others humanitarian considerations have taken precedence. As the Secretary-General put it so well in his statement, the United Nations thus found itself at the helm of some conflict resolution processes and forced to take a backseat in others.

Against this backdrop, it is quite understandable that the Secretary-General touched on the prospect of human security and intervention in the next century. The current course of world affairs leads us to observe that the international community has gradually begun to regard human security as one of the major elements in international affairs and to accord more attention to the concept of humanitarian intervention.

The theme raised by the Secretary-General — that the collective interest is the national interest — is indeed relevant; it has come at an opportune moment and will no doubt give the international community considerable food for thought in the years to come. In fact, the harsh realities of the present world have provoked heated debate in the world community on the emerging concept of human security and humanitarian intervention.

Although humanitarian intervention might legitimately be called for in certain conflict situations, we consider, in principle, that it must follow the universal principles agreed upon in the Charter of the United Nations. We hope that serious debates at the United Nations will help the international community formulate universally acceptable norms for humanitarian intervention that strike a balance between respect for sovereignty and respect for human rights.

The new era of globalization presents every nation with both opportunities and challenges in their pursuit of socio-economic development. While the benefits of globalization are undeniable, their distribution is unequal, and the gains of one country or segment of the population are often offset by the marginalization of others. Echoing the report of the Secretary-General, we would like to urge that a collective effort be made to form a global partnership to rectify the inequities of globalization. In our view, the United Nations should play a pivotal role in pursuing the initiative taken by the Secretary-General last year to establish a global partnership.

Globalization is no longer confined to the economic arena; it is now a fact of almost every facet of our lives, and as such must be addressed by the United Nations system as a whole. It is our concern that an unintended consequence of the spread of globalization could be the creation an "uncivil society". The report of the Secretary-General aptly warns that globalization's inadvertent fostering of organized crime on a global scale could damage both the social fabric and international peace.

To alleviate the disparities caused by globalization, the international community should redouble its efforts to eradicate poverty. Eradicating poverty will create a climate in which respect for basic human rights can flourish. If, on the other hand, absolute poverty is allowed to continue, it will sow the seeds of conflict and eventually threaten international peace and security.

According to an old proverb, it is hard to find money for medicine but easy to find it for a coffin. To avoid falling into that trap, the international community must give greater priority to eradicating poverty in developing countries. In this regard, we welcome the proposal by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development to reduce the number of those living in absolute poverty by half by 2015. For our part, we will actively contribute to efforts to enhance the development potential of developing countries.

One of the great achievements of the twentieth century has been the establishment of the international human rights regime. This regime evolved out of various conventions adopted over the past 100 years, starting

with those adopted at the International Peace Conference at The Hague. It is now our solemn responsibility to fashion a new millennium, grounded on the achievements of the past, in which a culture of human rights permeates every corner of the globe. This should be our legacy to the next generation.

Notwithstanding the legal regime of human rights, we have witnessed with outrage that flagrant violations of human rights, including genocide and other crimes against humanity, are still occurring in many parts of the world as we stand at the threshold of a new century. It is our belief that the international community must be more resolute on the issue of crimes against humanity and must do away with the practice of letting violators of humanitarian laws go unpunished. We must construct a judicial framework to ensure that all States and individuals comply with the obligations stipulated in international human rights and humanitarian conventions. In this context, we look forward to an early launch of the International Criminal Court.

We believe that a broader range of efforts to foster voluntary respect for human rights is essential. In this connection, we believe that principles and rules on the observance of international humanitarian law by peacekeepers, promulgated this year by the Secretary-General, have set a good example.

Finally, allow me to turn to the issue of humanitarian assistance. We are saddened to note that civilians have been the main victims in recent armed conflicts and that war and famine have resulted in massive refugee crises. Since neighbouring nations often absorb the bulk of refugee flows, their participation and cooperation is necessary if assistance is to be effective. Even if political or economic circumstances make it difficult for them to take in refugees, neighbouring countries should not turn away the refugees or repatriate them without paying heed to humanitarian considerations. The international community must also devise appropriate ways to lessen the financial burden on neighbouring countries that take in large flows of refugees.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reiterate the commitment of the Republic of Korea to the strengthening of the United Nations and its active participation in and contribution to our collective effort to cope with the challenges the world will face in the twenty-first century.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): On behalf of the Government of South Africa, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/54/1) on the work of the Organization. The report has provided us with ample food for thought in areas of central importance to the United Nations.

In his address prior to the start of the general debate on 20 September 1999, the Secretary-General chose to focus specifically on the prospects for human security and intervention in the next century. My delegation would like to take the opportunity presented by today's debate to endorse the Secretary-General's decision to emphasize the significance of this topic and to assure him of our support in guiding the United Nations through these difficult times.

The Secretary-General has challenged us to think anew about how the United Nations responds to political, human rights and humanitarian crises around the world. Perhaps in addressing this challenge we need to separate the discussion into two parts. First, we must consider discussing the principle of humanitarian intervention. Secondly, we need a more detailed discussion on the practical implications of such intervention. To do justice to both, we may need time for more reflection and should not seek a hasty consensus on these issues.

For South Africa, the principle of a commitment to humanitarian action holds special historical significance. South Africa joined the United Nations as a founding Member on 7 November 1945. At that time South Africa was ruled by a white minority regime which practised a national policy of racial discrimination known as "the colour bar", later to be refined as apartheid.

At that time, several delegations to the United Nations, among them most notably the Government of India, began challenging South Africa's racially discriminatory apartheid policies. In response, the South African minority regime argued that the issue was an internal matter. Shamefully, many Members of the United Nations agreed. It was not until the beginning of the end of colonial rule in the late 1950s, which saw Africa's nations, led by Kwame Nkrumah's Ghana, become independent, that voices against apartheid became louder. The Belgrade Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961 saw an emphatic rejection of the notion that apartheid was an internal matter. This was after the world had witnessed the massacre of 69 people demonstrating against apartheid in Sharpeville on 21 March 1960. Slowly, the United Nations was forced to deal with apartheid. Of course, the role since played by the United Nations and its Members in contributing to the

struggle against apartheid, and to its ultimate defeat, is well known and well appreciated.

For South Africa, however, questions still remain: Would early humanitarian intervention have made a difference in our struggle against apartheid? How much less would have been the damage and suffering for our people? Are we South Africans better off for having gone through the experience of fighting apartheid? Only history will answer these questions. What we know for certain today is that the statement made by the Secretary-General on 20 September 1999 has deep resonance for us in South Africa.

The Secretary-General's statement, taken together with the content of his valuable report, represents a timely and necessary call for a forthright and earnest debate on the significance of human security and intervention in the next century. My Government believes that for the States Members of the United Nations to collectively address potential and actual crises, our national interests must be more consistently aligned with the core Charter values of democracy, pluralism, human rights and the rule of law. At the same time, we need to ensure that the system of international relations is democratized, starting with the correct restructuring of the United Nations.

We must also include in that context the long-pending issue of reform of the Security Council. Six years is too long for us to talk continually and still fail to agree on a basic understanding of what we are trying to do. As was noted by the Secretary-General, when forceful interventions are deemed necessary, the Security Council, as defender of the common interest, should be able to rise to the challenge. At this time, however, it could be argued that the Security Council is not truly representative of the world. We believe that only through meaningful reform will the Security Council be able to act in a consistent, democratic, legitimate and transparent manner.

The South African Government agrees with the Secretary-General that this Organization's commitment to humanitarian action should be universal if it is to be legitimate. A key factor in this regard is prompt and early preventive action to ensure that most potential or actual crises are dealt with by peaceful means. The United Nations should opt for resolving conflicts before the necessity arises to send in peacekeepers. In order effectively and legitimately to address the prevention and ending of conflicts, including systematic and grave violations of human rights, the Security Council should be made more democratic and more accountable to the broader membership. The situation should not be allowed to continue where Africa and other developing regions do not have adequate and appropriate levels of representation on the body charged by Members of the United Nations with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Furthermore, South Africa remains extremely concerned at the deteriorating financial situation of the United Nations. The lack of financial means and the equally serious lack of moral and political will in this regard continue to severely limit our capacity to prevent and end conflicts, to reconstruct post-conflict societies sustainably, and to meet the real challenges posed by the process of globalization. It is imperative therefore that all Member States pay their assessed contributions in full, on time and without preconditions.

Next year the United Nations will host the millennium summit and the Millennium Assembly. It is incumbent upon all of us here to begin to rise to the challenge of answering the questions that will ultimately define the new vision we have for the United Nations in the twenty-first century and the sort of existence that we wish to offer all human beings.

In his recent address to the General Assembly, President Mbeki noted that the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights actually provide us with all the vision we need to succeed in our work. In particular, President Mbeki called for a practical programme of action. He said that

> "What is necessary is that we match the beliefs we profess with the necessary action ... action that will practically address the related issues of peace, democracy and development." [see A/54/PV.4]

Mr. Amer (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation is grateful to the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization, which both describes the international situation and enumerates the international community's successes and failures in attempting to face challenges posed by the international situation. The report puts forward proposals aimed at finding effective ways of addressing that situation.

The Secretary-General underlines the difficulties the Organization has encountered as it worked to maintain international peace and security. Among the issues he addresses, the Secretary-General highlights the question

of the legitimacy of intervention when the Organization fails to deal with a matter affecting collective security.

This issue has been interpreted in many different ways, as the Secretary-General has indicated, and I do not wish to add to the dispute. But my delegation would like to reaffirm that respect for the sovereignty of States is a principle that must not be transgressed or trampled underfoot. Thus my country strongly rejects intervention by a State, or a group of States, in the domestic affairs of another State under any pretext, including so-called humanitarian intervention.

The United Nations Charter must be the sole legal basis for any activities undertaken to preserve international peace and security. Any action that falls outside that framework constitutes a flagrant violation of all instruments governing relations among States, in particular the Charter of the United Nations, which prohibits the use of force, the threat of the use of force or intervention in the domestic affairs of other States. The Charter indicates what machinery must be used when dealing with any humanitarian or other problem that threatens international security. It defines mechanisms for such purposes, such as the General Assembly, whose role must be strengthened so it can deal with problems that threaten international peace and security. The international community should oppose attempts to avoid international machinery or channels when such attempts occur under the guise of humanitarian assistance. Ignoring this kind of conduct will provide a pretext for interference in the domestic affairs of States and will, therefore, impair the overriding principles of the international community: sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity and non-interference in the domestic affairs of States.

The Secretary-General's report has addressed efforts made to settle regional and international conflicts. Many conflicts have been settled by means of negotiations. This is satisfying, particularly since the prospects for peace in Africa have, indeed, improved, according to the report. My delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his support of African efforts in this connection. However, we consider, as the Secretary-General has said, that other, additional efforts must be made to resolve the remaining crises, as well as to prevent other conflicts from erupting and threatening what has already been accomplished.

We think that addressing the real causes of the problems in Africa can only be done globally, emphasizing the priorities laid down by Africa itself. The decisions of the Organization of African Unity on the settlement of conflicts must be endorsed, and the burdens associated with such obligations must also be shared. This is the only way to solve the problem of instability that exists in some southern African countries.

Africa is totally aware of the fact that it must meet the development challenges before it, but the cooperation of the international community with it remains indispensable. In fact, African countries can achieve sustainable development and eliminate the plague of poverty, which was defined by the Secretary-General as being the greatest challenge before the continent, only if the entire debt of Africa, which currently exceeds $350 billion, is cancelled. International efforts must be made to eradicate malaria, and AIDS, which affects the population in 29 African States.

We would like to thank the Secretary-General for his efforts and for the efforts undertaken by the United Nations Development Group, but the United Nations and its institutions must prepare studies that would lead to raising the value of African commodities and develop plans for modernizing airports, seaports and road systems. Africa requires concrete action rather than compassion or solidarity or great speeches in support of the Africans. This will be achieved only at a high cost.

There is also a high cost involved in embargoes against civilians. We are quite indignant here, because the sanctions imposed on Libya were done in a spirit of revenge and were based on simple suspicions, not evidence. The Libyan population has had to suffer from these sanctions for more than seven years.

What is even worse is that the United States has profited from the breakdown in the international balance and led the Security Council to impose an embargo on Libya, then prevented the Council from lifting the embargo. The United States is seeking compensation from Libya to be paid to the families of the victims of the Pan Am flight, before the court has even rendered a decision. This flies in the face of established principles of international law, that is to say presumption of innocence, a principle that is accepted by all States throughout the world. Many members of the international community have called for an immediate lifting of that embargo because Libya has fully complied with relevant Security Council resolutions in this regard.

Activities dealing with international law in the United Nations are numerous. There is assistance for

negotiations aimed at reaching multilateral agreements, and we are very satisfied with that. But we must consolidate our efforts and show respect for international law in various international forums in the United Nations. Such appeals are frequently flouted and domestic laws are frequently adopted and applied extraterritorially. The Helms-Burton Act, and the D'Amato-Kennedy bill are just two examples.

In a few weeks, the United Nations Decade of International Law will be commemorated. We believe that this provides an opportunity for the international community to reiterate its refusal to allow any State to apply its domestic laws to other States. The international community must exert pressure necessary to ensure that such laws, which dissipate the spirit of the Charter, be revoked. They impair the sovereignty of States and are a flagrant interference in the domestic affairs of States.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.